

## **Guy B. Symonds**

### **Died in the line of duty on September 12, 1927**

#### **Description of Act**

Guy B. Symonds of the Magnolia station died in the line of duty on Monday morning, September 12, 1927, succumbing to a heart attack after being summoned to the Oceanside Hotel fire. Symonds drove the Combination C kit or rescue squad, and Ladder 3 followed. Shortly after reaching the scene of the fire, Symonds went to the truck to get a ladder and collapsed. Firefighter Harold W. Dunbar came to assist and found Symonds unconscious. Dunbar placed him in the rescue squad and drove him to the Addison Gilbert Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

#### **Background**

Only thirty-seven years old, Symonds had been a member of the Fire Department since 1908, nearly 20 years. He was a native of Gloucester, remembered as always pleasant and congenial, a good firefighter, and a conscientious worker. He was the son of William and Mary (Morton) Symonds and was survived by his wife Cora Louise (Prosser) Symonds; his daughter, Mary Elizabeth Symonds; his father, William W. Symonds; his sister, Ruth (Symonds) Davis, all of Gloucester, and his brother, W. Leighton Symonds of Saugus. Guy Symonds was a veteran of World War I.

#### **Postscripts**

Symonds funeral procession was headed by Fire Chief Homer R. Marchant. All of Magnolia paused along with city-wide participants to honor this young man held in such esteem. As the cortege turned into Fuller Street to pass the Magnolia Engine house, the bell tolled in his memory. At the grave services, a firing squad fired three volleys under the direction of Sargeant Edward Brown. Squad members were William Doucette, Harnet Levy, Richard Carter, Albert O'Donnell, Frank Sweeney, Walter Ehler, William Collins, and Harold Gardner. Taps were sounded by Bugler Tony Gentile. Among the pallbearers were Richard A. Perry and Antone Courant, Jr., of Engine 3, who were associated with Symonds in his earlier firefighting years.

Guy B. Symonds felt that he could make significant improvements to enhance the comfort of injured persons compelled to ride in the Rescue Squad. He devised a plan to make these improvements and implement it. Little did he know that he would take his last ride in the very bed that he sought so hard to improve for others in need . . . truly an irony of fate.

#### **References**

*Gloucester Daily Times*, September 12, 1927 and September 15, 1927, and personal conversations with Miss Mary Symonds, daughter of Guy B. Symonds and staff member of the Sawyer Free Library.